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Global Information Society- Moving Towards an Inclusive Society

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Abstract

As the digital revolution has now truly arrived in Asia particularly in our country in a big way and cable, satellite & terrestrial operators are making the fast moves from analogue to digital, we can see its benefits all around. Being basically a mass communication professional, I shall first introduce you to the background of how convergence is at the roots of emergence of digital technology. Convergence of computers, telecommunication and Broadcasting. Communication in all its form was transmitted through the means of continuous electromagnetic waves along with particular kind of media. For instance, voice for the purpose of telephony was carried over cooper cables as mild electric current while pictures and sound for television broadcasting was carried over as electromagnetic waves. Thus one line of copper wire could carry only one stream of conversation at a point of time.

Keyword- Revolution, Telecommunication, Digital technology, Binary digits, Electromagnetic waves.

Introduction

Digital technology has made possible for content, be it voice, pictures or data, to be converted into similar kind of signals comprising of binary digits i.e. 0 & 1, and send it over any means of communication, including copper cables, fiber optical cables, co-axial cables or as electromagnetic waves over air by terrestrial or satellite transmission. Convergence is an on-going process, which entails the coming together of the following:-

- Content from the audiovisual and publishing industries;
- Potentially separate physical infrastructure (such as all those supporting broadcasting television or telecommunication services) able to carry similar sorts of information at increasingly lower costs;
- The interactive information storage and processing capabilities of the computer world;

- The ambiguity, improving functionality and ease of use of consumer electronics.

In this "Information Revolution" brought by digital technology, who are the "have's" & "have-nots"? Who is benefiting most from these developments? Only a few, those who can afford the high costs and those with leisure time.

In the agriculture-based society of the past, the rich Zamindars enjoyed a life of ease and leisure with dozens of servants while vast majority of farmers and workers toiled in fields and factories. Industrial Revolution brought new home appliances closing the gap a little. Industrial devices gave birth to washing machines, cooling pumps and food-processing industry gave birth to refrigerators.

By world war-II, most of homes in the west owned those home appliances. Democratization process speeded up; moves towards 'Equalized Society' with 'Mechanical Servants' brought relief particularly for women giving them enough leisure time for pursuing other areas of interests.

Now, while west has entered the Knowledge-based Information Society, has the digital convergence brought information gap? Yes. And the same is true of our county. Widening gap between those who can access vast amount of rich on-line information at home, office & schools/colleges and the rest of society. As in industrialized society, working class had no access for household help till the arrival of WASHING MACHINGE, ELECTRIC IRON, VACCUM CLEANERS, AND REFERIGERATORS ETC.

Similarly, now in information age, while we are moving towards a globalized society, are the ordinary people able to interface with all electronic data?

Answer is a big "No' for majority of population in Developing Countries. Because personal computer, most commonly used tool in office or home today:-

- Too confusing to buy;
- Too hard to set up, install & maintain;
- Too expensive;
- Too heavy, too large & inconvenient.

Thus personal computer as a device for masses has failed. It is just like building highways and people without cars, & information super-highways without PCs. *INTERACTIVITY* is

the key word in electronic age of communication. To find required information from old media sources such as news papers, magazines, books and broadcast TV & Radio is also time consuming and cumbersome.

The solution to the problem is to design and develop new class of computing devices, let us name them as "**Information Appliance**", which may narrow the gap of "DIGITAL DIVIDE" between have's and have-nots'. One shining example is mobile phone, which has revolutionized our life.Put simply, the power of World Wide Web is and will continue to be the *SIMPLICITY* with which we can make information globally available and simplicity with which that information can be accessed.

Thus *SIMPLICITY* is the key to fountain of knowledge. There is a need to give people access to Information Super-highways, a device to use without the need to understand hardware, software or peripherals at an inexpensive price – *INFORMATION APPLIANCE*.

(a) To provide consumers a limited purpose, low-cost device that is approachable and easy to use – mobile has already achieved the objective, though partly.

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(b) To provide a simple, user-friendly and inexpensive interface to electronic information for millions of people who find PCs too difficult and expensive.

(c) To simplify the functionality: with say multi-colored buttons and space efficiency. Laptop and now tablet PCs are already visible in the market but too expensive for a common man.

(d) Affordable low costs.

After having discussed at length the importance and urgency to design and develop '*information appliance*' for the globalized information society of the future, now I shall discuss the importance of **Creative Content**, the key factor for developing a user-friendly information society and which is rather more important to sustain it than the technological development. Creative people will drive the information Society of the future.The need for change of focus form technologies that will enable emergence of global Information Society to the content that will sustain it has since been realized by Europe and Europeans have already initiated action. Creation, management and

delivery of comprehensive multi-media content are the focus.

To realize the goal of a Global Information Society as a truly inclusive society in which all sections of the society can contribute equally, let us first look at Global ICT Scenario.

(i) *Skills*: (Development of new soft skills, learning-centric & life long learning focus)

(ii) *Media*: (Convergence, new markets, new needs, new formats new business models)

(iii) *Technologies*: (Digitization, processing, costs involved, new services, new uncertainties)

(iv) *Regulations*: (Liberalization, ownership,
privacy, encryption, internet)

(v) *Demographies*: (Unemployment, aging, women, life-styles, literacy, poverty, rich & poor, persons with disabilities)

Thus creating user-friendly information society will have two main purposes:

(A) Accelerating its emergence by new technological tools

.

(B) Insuring that needs of individuals and citizens are met.

Conclusions

Action 1 is to develop systems & services for citizens.

Action 2 is to develop new methods of work and electronic commerce i.e. to enable individuals & organizations to innovate and be more effective & efficient in work & business.

Action 3 will be generation of multi-media content and tools to promote culture and creativity.

Action 4 will be the development and application of technologies, systems and methods for creating, processing, managing, accessing and exploiting multi-media content.

All actions will fulfill as-

1. To facilitate life-long training and education
2. To stimulate creativity
3. To promote linguistic and cultural diversity
4. To design and develop future information products and services

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Work Cited:

- Europe has already initiated a project named "**Tele-presence and shared virtual environments"** by using four key communication modes. One to one: Rapport & fact transfer, using e-mails & Telephony One to many: Dissemination of information by Broadcast technologies Many to one: Information Retrieval supported by data communication Small group: Collaborative, supported by audio-video conferences Delivery mechanism for all these four modes of communication is copper, fiber-optic, radio & television. But interface at the user-end is through **WEB Browser**.

- Thus Web Browser becomes the **Community Network** Interface of Global Information Society, enabling, empowering, enriching, enhancing, and unleashing creativities talent lying dormant in our society, particularly disabled and disadvantaged sections of our society, to enable them as equal partners in global information society.The result will, therefore, be involvement of whole of humanity in a rich integration of many local cultures and a SINGLE GLOBAL CULTURE. The challenge, therefore, is not to deprive life of 10 billion-world populations and to create a world, which is fair, prosperous and sustainable.A growing recognition that a material oriented model for a prosperous society cannot be sustained as increased world population aspires to the western middle class.
- Social Media and Wikipedia